



## Clark County Foster Care

### **Foster and Adoptive Parent *Inquiry Booklet***



*believing and investing  
in the future of a child*

CLARK  
*courage...*

COUNTY  
*compassion...*

FOSTER  
*fortitude...*

CARE  
*commitment*

...open your *heart*  
and your *home...*  
the rewards are *limitless*



The Department of Family Services Recruitment Team would like to thank you for your interest in learning more about becoming a Foster/Adoptive Parent. We need you, in fact, we need hundreds more like you, to take on the challenge of caring for, protecting, and nurturing children in our custody.

There are many children in our custody who need caring adults in their lives to provide guidance and stability. Large sibling groups, children with special health care needs, and teens are often the most in need of a temporary or permanent home. Foster/Adoptive parents can help meet that need and provide stability to both children and families.

The decision to parent someone else's child can be difficult, especially combined with your own family responsibilities. Our belief is that children grow best in families, if not their own, then with relatives or foster/adoptive families. We hope you will decide to join us and support our children and families to build stronger communities and insure promising futures for our children.

If you need more detailed information about our program please call 455-0181 and ask to speak to a Recruiter.

We applaud your decision to explore the opportunity of being a Foster/Adoptive Parent.

On behalf of the children of Clark County, with appreciation,

***Department of Family Services  
Foster & Adoption Recruitment Team***

**Upcoming Information Session Dates and Locations for  
Prospective Applicants**

**Registration is not required for Information Sessions.  
For additional times and locations that may be available,  
please call 455-0181.**

**Servicio De Interpretes**

- Hay servicio de interpretes disponible para todas las clases.
- Para confirmar el interprete puede llamar al 455-1878 por lo menos dos (2) días antes de la clase.
- Si usted no va a asistir a una clase para la cual pidió un interprete, por favor notifique a la Oficina de Interpretes al 455-1878.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome..... 4

Why are Children in Clark County Custody? ..... 5

Who are the Children?..... 6

What Are the Requirements? ..... 7

What Are the Steps to Foster Care and Adoption? ..... 8

Am I Ready?..... 9

Can Relatives Do This? ..... 11

Important Phone Numbers..... 12



## **WELCOME FROM CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES**

Thank you for your interest in the Foster Care and Adoption Programs. The enclosed information will help you understand our agency, the programs, and the Foster/Adoptive parent training and licensure process. If you have questions after reviewing this booklet, please call 455-0181 and ask to speak to a recruiter, or attend an upcoming Information Session noted on page 2.

### **FAMILY SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT**

To protect children by building and supporting nurturing, stable families in collaboration with community partners.

#### ***Our Core Beliefs:***

- The role of DFS is to determine the safety of children, and, where change is needed in families, to influence positive change in families and youth that will ensure future safety, permanency and well-being.
- A child's safety takes precedence over all other concerns.
- Most parents are capable of and motivated to protect and nurture their children.
- A child's emotional security powerfully influences development and well-being.
- A child's emotional security is strongly linked to family membership, and particularly to continuity in the relationship with the birth parent(s), followed by continuity of caregiver relationships.
- The art of child welfare practice involves successfully balancing concerns for safety with concern for the emotional security of children and families.
- Families who have not criminally abused their children should not be treated as criminals.
- Successfully meeting the child's needs requires attention to safety, permanency, emotional security and overall well-being.

- Children in the custody of the county should receive a higher level of care than the standards minimally set for families.
- The cooperation of family members, caregivers and youth is influenced significantly by the respect and consideration we demonstrate with them.
- The helping relationship is a principle basis for influencing and facilitating human change.
- The focus of intervention should be based on the child's needs for safety, development and well being rather than society's need to punish caregiver acts.
- We value the diversity of families and welcome lesbian, gay, and bisexual (lgb) couples or individuals to be considered as foster and/or adoptive parents.
- DFS will make available the application process for the adoption of a child to all persons regardless of age, color, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religion, or natural origin.

## **WHY ARE CHILDREN IN CLARK COUNTY CUSTODY?**

A child may come to the attention of the Department because of concerns reported by a teacher, police officer, family member, friend, doctor, or any other concerned person involved in that child's life. Anyone who has a concern about the safety or well-being of a child can make a referral that they suspect child abuse or neglect has occurred. Referrals that meet the criteria for a report of child abuse or neglect will be investigated. If the Department finds that the family needs help, every effort is made to assist the family without removing the child. Only if reasonable efforts fail, and the child is at risk if she or he remains in the home, will the Department remove the child from the home. It is at that time that the Department will seek another family environment for the child, either with relatives or with a foster family.



# ***Foster Care and Adoption Defined***

## **WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?**

Foster care is a program where individuals and families provide a safe, stable and loving environment for children in need of temporary out-of-home care. The goal of the foster care program is to maintain children in a safe and nurturing environment that is supportive of his or her development, while assisting his or her parents in increasing personal capacity to resume care of the child. The Department will address the concerns that brought the family into the child welfare system. **The first goal of foster care is to reunite children with their families.**

## **WHAT IS ADOPTION?**

Adoption is an option to provide a permanent home to children when reunification with their families is not possible. Adoption establishes a permanent legal relationship between a parent or parents and children who are not related by birth. Once a child from the foster care system is adopted, the Department is no longer involved, and the adoptive parent has all the rights and responsibilities that a birth parent does. Adoption is most often the preferred permanency plan for children when a child cannot return home to their birth family.

## **WHO ARE THE CHILDREN?**

Children who come into custody of the Department range in age from newborn to 17 years of age. They need the caring and commitment of a family home.

The children are of different races, ethnicities and religions, and need help to maintain their own identities. They need help to stay connected to their birth families, and often need help learning how to feel lovable, capable and responsible.

Some of the children have emotional or medical problems, and have been abused or neglected. Oftentimes, the children in need of



homes are members of sibling groups and need to remain together.

## **WHAT DO FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENTS DO?**

Foster/Adoptive Parents do everything birth parents do, often more. They open their hearts and homes to children in need, and provide stability and support to children who may not have had that in their lives. Foster/Adoptive Parents are responsible for advocating for their children, meeting with teachers, scheduling and transporting to doctor and therapy appointments, and attending visits with birth parents and siblings. It is also important for Foster/Adoptive Parents to support the bond between the child and birth family. Foster/Adoptive Parents have to learn how to “share-parent” with birth parents. It is critical for Foster/Adoptive Parents to participate in case planning and attend court hearings. Foster/Adoptive Parents must also be available to meet with the caseworker at least once monthly to discuss any issues.

## **WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?**

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, above all you must be willing to open your heart and home to a child in need. In addition, applicants:

- Must be at least 21 years of age
- Have sufficient income to meet personal needs
- Be in good physical and emotional health
- Can be single, married, or coupled
- Be able to pass an FBI background check
- Attend all training classes
- Be committed to using positive forms of discipline and not using any form of corporal punishment.



## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Foster and adoptive parents are not paid income. Foster parents are provided a monthly reimbursement to assist with the children's expenses based on the child's age and any behavioral or medical needs. In addition, there is a personal allowance and monthly clothing allowance. The basic reimbursement rates are as follows:

Age 0-12 years: \$682.94 (\$11.00 of which is for personal incidentals, \$37.50 is for clothing)

Age 13 & older: \$773.17 (\$22.00 is of which is for personal incidentals, \$56.25 is for clothing)

Financial assistance may be available to adoptive parents who adopt from the foster care system. This subsidy can be up to the basic reimbursement, but depends on the special needs of the child.

## WHAT ARE THE STEPS?

If you are interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent, we encourage you to attend an information session. You can attend any listed in the front of this booklet, or call 455-0181 to get the current list of upcoming information sessions. If you like what you hear, we will ask you to complete the next steps listed below.

### Steps to become a licensed foster/adoptive parent:

1. Information Session—Informational meeting to provide an overview of the Department and the foster/adoption programs in order for you to make an informed decision as to whether or not our programs are right for you.
2. Prescreen—All adults seeking licensure as well as adults living in the home with the potential licensee must pass a local background check.
3. Fingerprinting—All applicants and adults (over age 18) in the home must get fingerprinted. If one adult in the home is unable to pass the pre-screen and/or fingerprinting process, then the entire household will be precluded from training.

4. Pre-Service Training—Our training consists of 10 three hour sessions. Couples and adults that share parenting responsibilities are both required to complete the training and attend the training at the same time. Children are not allowed at the training classes.
5. Home Study/Family Profile—This process will occur while you are completing the training. This includes a series of interviews and home safety inspections with your licensing worker.
6. Placement—After you are licensed, a child or children will be placed in your home. The Department will try to only place children who are a good fit for your home. You can refuse any placement you feel may not be a good match for your home. During the licensing process you will explore the ages, genders, races, and behavioral issues you will be able to care for.

## AM I READY?

This questionnaire will help you determine if you and your family are ready to become a foster/adoptive family.

1. **T/F *I have enough room in my home for a foster/adoptive child.*** You must have adequate space for a foster/adoptive child. A foster/adoptive child may share a bedroom with other children in certain instances, but each child must have his or her own bed and dresser.
2. **T/F *I am ready to make safety modifications to my home to meet licensing requirements.*** It is important that your home is safe and free of hazards. During the home study process your licensing worker will review specific requirements, such as pool fencing if you have children under the age of 5, fire extinguishers, and smoke alarms.
3. **T/F *I am in good physical, emotional and mental health.*** Being a parent can be demanding, and being a foster/adoptive parent can be even more demanding. You must be physically and emotionally healthy to be able to provide appropriate care for abused and neglected children. You will be required to have a TB skin test in order to be a foster/adoptive parent.

4. **T/F** ***I have never had a valid case with an agency due to abuse or neglect.*** If you have had a substantiated case with child protective services you will not be able to be a foster/ adoptive parent.
5. **T/F** ***I have adequate income to meet my current family's needs.*** You do not need to be wealthy to be a foster parent, but you do need to have income other than the reimbursement you will get is for the care of the child, not personal income.
6. **T/F** ***No adult in my home has ever been convicted of a crime.*** If you or any adult in your home has been convicted of certain criminal offenses, such as murder, rape, domestic violence, crimes against children, or certain other violent crimes, you will not be able to become a foster parent. If you have had any criminal convictions in the last five years, you will not be able to become a foster parent. Outdated non-violent felonies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
7. **T/F** ***I am ready to begin the home study process now!*** You are ready to begin the process if your life and home are “stable”, meaning that you are not about to move, are not making any major life changes, and are not having any financial, marital, or emotional difficulties.

If you answered **True** to the above questions, you are ready to begin the process! If you answered false to any, please call 455-0181 and ask to speak to a recruiter for more information.



## **I'M A RELATIVE—CAN I DO THIS TOO?**

1. ***If I am a relative of a child in foster care, can I apply to be their foster parent?***

Yes, if the child is in the custody of Clark County, you may apply to become a foster parent for that specific child.

2. ***Since I am a relative, do I have to meet all the qualifications to be a foster parent?***

Yes, everyone who applies to be a foster parent must meet the same eligibility requirements. The required pre-service training hours may vary if you are a relative.

3. ***Can I adopt a relative's child?***

If the child is in foster care, and the birth parent's rights have been terminated, or they relinquished their rights, you can apply to the Department to adopt the child. You must meet all requirements of licensure to adopt.

4. ***If I have legal custody or a guardianship, can I become a foster parent to collect reimbursement?***

No, if you have been given custody or guardianship of a child, the Department of Family Services is not involved and does not have any financial support available. Depending on your income, you may be able to qualify for services or financial assistance through the Clark County Department of Social Service.

5. ***I am caring for a relative's child and am in the process of becoming a foster parent, can I get financial assistance now?***

No, assistance is not available until you are licensed.

6. ***If I foster one child, can I foster another?***

Often, families may become foster parents for a specific child but find the experience rewarding and wish to foster other children. You can contact your licensing worker to find out exactly what you would need to do accept other children in your home.

The Department of Family Services has Kinship Liaisons to assist relatives with the training and licensing process so you can get through the process as quickly as possible. Please contact the Kinship program at **455-7409** to find out more information.

**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline .....	399-0081
Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment Unit .....	455-0181
Foster and Adoptive Parent Training Unit.....	455-5295
Kinship Liaison Program.....	455-1061
Department of Social Service .....	455-4270

**NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILY SERVICE CENTERS**

Central .....	455-7200
121 S. Martin L. King Blvd. Las Vegas, NV	
South.....	455-7900
522 E. Lake Mead Pkwy #5 Henderson, NV	
Martin Luther King .....	455-0740
2424 Martin L King # C, N Las Vegas	
East.....	486-7500
4180 S Pecos Rd., LV, NV.....	
486-7500/455-8806	
West .....	486-0000
6171 W. Charleston Bldg 7, 8 & 15 LV, NV	
North .....	486-5610
4538 W Craig Rd, Suite 290	



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RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING  
CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES  
121 S MARTIN LUTHER KING BLVD  
LAS VEGAS NV 89106

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